When Churchyards Yawn

By Elizabeth Jordan

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NCE, when I was a little girl, three whole years younger than I am now, Sister Es-telle wrote this sentence in my autograph "May angels ever guide your pen. Sometimes they do. I can almost feel them guiding it; and beautiful flowers of thought fall on the snowy pages before me, and I write so fast my hand gets covered with ink up to the wrist, and I have a dreadful ime afterward, with pumice-stone. Even when angels are not guiding, though, I usually have two beautiful hopes sprout-ing in my breast when I begin a story.

One is the hope of making it true to life; well do I realize that this is the highest art.

My second hope is that Sister Irmingarde will read the story aloud to our literary class at St. Katharine's. She does, sometimes, read a girl's story when it is very good. She hasn't read one of mine for ages, though she told me with her own lips that several of my efforts "held striking examples of what to do and what to avoid in writing fiction. But I've got to write this piece of literature without either an angel or a hope. I know already that it is not going to be true to life, and that Sister Irmingarde is not going to read it aloud to the class. And the only example in it is Mabel Bios-

som, who is, indeed, a terrible one.

Not that the story isn't going to be good. It's going to have a ruin in it, and a churchyard, and a ghost, and grim, mysterious, blood-curdling happenings. If those don't make a good story, I don't know what does. And on! There's so much action that the mere mem-of all that happened that ne'er-to-be-forgotton Hallowe'en night makes me feel tired now! As for Mabel Blossom, she's black and blue yet, from the exercise she got. But a story with a ghost in it can't very well be "true to life," can it? And, woe is me! it has wickedness in it too; and Sister Irmingarde shrings from wickedness the way a sensitive plant shrinks when you put your foot on it.

You can see how discouraging all this is, but I've got to write the story just the same. My art is before all, and whenever a plot is inside of me it has to come cut, no matter what it is. Not even wickedness can stop me. Only last New Year's Day I wrote this sentence in my resolution book. It was one of seventeen, but it came first:

"There is no subject in life that I will not write a story about before I get through."

I don't think I ever made a resolution that was so interesting. The more I thought of it, the more I liked it. I read it aloud right away to Mabel Blossom and Maudie Joyce, and Maudie clapped her hands; and Mabel went to her room and began to pack her trunk. She knew it meant that I would probe deeper than ever into her soul, and read her thoughts before she knew she had any; and well indeed might Mabel Blossom tremble. You see, Maudie and Mabel and I run som tremble. You see, Maudie and Mahel and I run the class, but our influences are different. I am the girl who thinks of intellectual things, and does them. Maudie is the girl who thinks of spiritual things and does them. Mahel Blossom, alas! alack! is the one who sometimes thinks of wicked things, and does them, and gets the rest of us into trouble. Yet we love her I wonder why? I will analyze her sinful heart, and perhaps we will learn.

Mabel doesn't like this. I let her read all I write just as fast as I write it, so she can fix her mind on higher things; but she 'most always feels disapproving and cross over what I say about her, so I'm afraid it doesn't really develop her spiritual nature much. of course, I have to keep right on holding the mirror up to her, as Shakespeare says. To make everything clear, I will now describe the difference between Mabel and Maudie, as they look to the piercing gaze of an eve that sees into the deenest recesses of human beings I mean my eye. The gentle reader ought to know that without being told, but I read it to Mabel, and she

When I am with Maudie we talk about life, and deals, and the community spirit of helpfulness, and the hundred best books and what they do to you, and the growth of the soul. I can actually feel my soul grow while Maudie talks; sometimes it stretches and stretches till I think she must be blowing it up, the way a boy does a toy balloon. The minute Maudie comes into my room evenings I can feel my soul begin to spread; and sometimes, though I never hinted it to Maudie, it makes me feel tired and nervous. Maudie is interested in her soul all the time, and I am interested in my soul some of the time. I suppose that's the difference. Mabel Blossom doesn't seem to be much interested in

her soul any of the time. When Mabel comes to see me we always laugh a lot. and we talk about spreads and the convent clubs and my stories and Mabel's patients—the ones she is going have when she's a doctor- and what she's going to do to them; and I feel the way you feel when you put on a wrapper at night, and sit down before the open fire with your feet on the fender—wafin and comfy and rested—and my moral nature slumbers. If Maudie Joyce said, "Let's cut lessons to-morrow, and sneak into town and have tea and cakes and inm at Roberti's." I'd be so surprised I'd fall off my chair first. Then I would get up and show Maudie how dreadful it was to break the rules and what it would

do to the soul, and we wouldn't go.
But if Mabel Blossom said it, somehow it would seem different-as if one needed exercise, you know, and nourishment, and the mind must not be overtaxed. Before I knew what I was doing I'd be at Roberti's drinking tea and eating six kinds of cake with jam spread on them, and laughing at the that it was said. I'd hardly even remember that it was them, and laughing at the funny things Mabel until one of the upper-class girls strolled in and caught us, and we were on our way back to St. Katharine's on the trolley, seeing the clusters of birches by the roadside that looked like groups of young novices, and shadows that seemed like Sister Irmingarde's black veil, and listening to the little meaning winds among the trees, like the voices of nuns discouraged over

Isn't that a pretty way to describe the way our guilty consciences work as we go home through the woods at twilight? Mabel Blossom says I mustn't point out such things; but if I don't the gentle reader may skip them, in his haste to get at the story. For we are now coming to the story, though Mabel says she

most sure we never would. Mabel came to me one day in October, looking important. She found me sitting under a willow on the bank of the river that flows through the convent grounds. I had Shakespeare in one hand and the Bible in the other, for I am forming my literary style on them. I was feeling dreadfully depressed because I couldn't decide whether to keep to one of them alone, or make my style a mixture of both. You can imagine how unsettling and mournful that was, with a lot of dead autumn leaves on the ground, too. I wasn't a bit glad to see Mabel. I would have enjoyed Maudie more just then, for my soul couldn't have felt any worse then it did. But, of course, I moved over on the bench so Mahel could sit down, though I laid aside my books "with visible reluctance," way beroines do in stories. Mabel didn't mind. She never does. Her soul is not sensitive like mine and she was just bursting with a plan.

"May Iverson," she said, "do you want a new experience—the kind you've never had before?"

I did. I always did, and right well did Mabel Blossom know it. She fixed me with her glittering eye,

like the ancient mariner,

"Will you promise solemnly to do it, and not to tell a living soul, except Maudie Joyce, till it's all over? Cross your heart?" she asked. "Is it wicked?" I inquired. "It is," said Mabel Blossom.

It is, said Mabel Blossom.

I promised.

"It's this," said Mabel Blossom, with terrible coolness. "Kittie James, and Mabel Muriel Murphy, and Janet Trelawney, and Adeline Thurston, and I are going to the ruined church on Hallowe'en, at midnight. When we get there we're going to ask the spirits the names of our future husbands!"

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I gasped. Then I picked up my Bible and pulled an expression of disapproval over my features, and looked just as much fike Sister Irmingarde as I could. "You know perfectly well, Mabel Blossom." I said, coldly, "that you can't do such a thing. It's against the rules. Besides, there's no way of getting out at midnight. The doors are all locked, and the portress

carries the keys." Mabel knew this, but the reader doesn't, so I have to put it in here. I didn't really say that about the keys to Mabel. I just said she couldn't do it. She

Mabel looked stubborn. She thought she was looking firm, but I have to tell what the effect really was. She made her lips into a little straight streak across her face, and dragged her eyebrows over her nose. I wish I could do it. Then she said.

"I told you it was wicked. That's where the wickedness comes in."

dness comes in. That's usually where Mabel's wickedness comes inbreaking the rules. She waited a minute; then she

said, in cross tones:

Well, are you coming, or aren't you?" I kept on hesitating. You can see how terrifying the idea was, but you can't imagine all the horror of it, for you don't know about that haunted ruin. It was a little country church about a mile from the convent, and it had been built ages and ages ago—as much as fifty years, I think. It had never been consecrated and used, for it was found that the ground was "unhallowed"; and there were all sorts of thrilling stories about it. We used to take new girls there at twilight, the very first thing, and tell the stories to them, and watch their shudderings. One legend was that lost souls had claimed the church and now held service in it. There was a little churchyard around

it. The windows were gone, the south wall had fallen, and the old cellar had become a big, bottomless hole. There was a cracked bell in the little steeple, and it rang at night sometimes, in a high wind; then the country folks said the devil was ringing it to call

his own around him. This was the place where Mabel Blossom expected me to go at midnight and ask the spirits about my fu-ture husband. The thought made by blood sing in my ears, and the soles of my feet prickly—but I wanted to go, dreadfully. While I was thinking it over, and remembering the awful things I had heard. Mabel Blossom was watching me and smiling cool,

"Oh, come on, May," she said. "It wouldn't be any fun without you; and you can write a story about it if we don't die."

That sounded like the whistle before the train starts. You know how it makes you feel—that you've got to get on the train right away. I got on. That means I yielded. Then we put our heads together and made our plans. I will not repeat them here. Suffice to say, as real writers put it, we arranged everything. When we came up against a problem Mabel Blossom's mind could not solve, need I tell whose mind did solve it? It was mine. Mabel asked me to tell Maudie Joyce and get her to come with us. I did. She came. There are golden instants when Maudie forgets about her soul, and this was one of them.

The night of Hallowe'en fell. Don't you think that sounds better than to say it came? We went to bed at nine o'clock, as usual. We had to. We got in with our clothes on, and we were all drawing deep breaths of sleeping innocence when Sister Edna made her final rounds, just before the Great Silence. Then the convent lights everywhere went out, and the darkness got thicker and blacker, and the sorrows of my past came and sat on my bed in rows, the way do, and my conscience gnawed on the thought of what we were going to do like a mouse gnawing a hole in the floor. I could almost hear it.

We had to wait till ten, and the only way I could when ten came was to listen till a distant clock struck. I can 'most always hear it strike, but this night I thought it never would. I was sure it would strike five or six, if it struck anything again; but at last the ten strokes sounded, slowly and solemnly, and I got up and crept out of the room like a wraith. Every girl at St. Katharine's has a room to herself, out the rooms are small and close together, on both sides of a long hall, and the two girls on the right and left of me were dreadfully inquisitive and always istening for sounds. Sometimes when I woke at night I made noises just to puzzle them-upset a chair or threw a shoe at the wall-but you'd better believe I to-night. I hardly dared to breathe, and believe it took me ten minutes to open my door and get over the sill. I'd turn the door-knob a little and wait till the echoes died away, and then turn some

The hall was like a long black tunnel with a slip-pery-bottom, but I slid along it in my stocking feet, holding my shoes in my hand. I was afraid I'd step on a pin, but there weren't any—fancy Sister Har-mona letting pins lie on her polished floor that is the pride of her life! Then I thought of mice, and the thought was so terrible that I stuck my usind on the pin again. Please read that sentence twice; it's worth it. Even Mabel Blossom says so.

At last I got to our meeting-place-a window opening on a balcony at the far end of the east hall, away from sleepers. All the girls were there except Maudie's conscience had been gnaw-Maudie Joyce. ing, too, but not enough to keep her from us. She arrived about a second after I did. Our presence seemed to be a great comfort to our dear companions. Kittie James caught my hand and held it tight, and I distinctly heard Mabel Blossom draw a deep gurgling breath of relief. Even her dauntless soul did not yearn to lead that group out of the second-floor window, and down the side of the balcony, through the ivy, across the convent grounds, and a whole mile in the dark to a

the convent grounds, and a whole mile in the dark to a haunted church. There are limits to any danntlessness. Now that we were there, though, Mabel led the way, in a cercless manner, as if she had meant to all along, and we followed her. We got down safely, but I'm sure some of Mother Ernesta's feet ivy on that wall won't cling much any more. Kittie lames fell when she was about six feet from the ground, and, of course, the started to shrick but Mandie had presence of she started to shrick, but Manile had presence of mind and caught her by the throat before much of the shrick got out. We counted noses, and when we knew we were together, with no loved one lost in the ivy.

we started for the ruin. I will now stop and describe the scene, though I know the reader is in suspense. It was just the kind of a night for Hallowe'en—"when churchyards yawn and graves give up their dead." The sky was covered with moving clouds. A cold wind blew across the fields, and there was a tiny little piece of moon that looked like Maudie Joyce's curved pearl pin. It kept peeping in and out among the clouds. When we espeeping in and out among the clouds. When we especially needed light it stayed behind them; but when there was something grim and grisly ahead of us, as they ran they uttered choked, horrible noises. They that moon came out and made it look worse. A year were trying to scream and they couldn't. It was like

ago I would have said that it was like a silver horn or a golden crescent. My expressions are more original

or a golden crescent. My expressions are more original now. I would be sorry if no one but me noticed it, though already I realize that much of an artist's greatest art is lost to the thoughtless reader.

The girls were huddled together in a group, white and scared, staring at the ruined church, just ahead of us, and afraid to go one step farther. It was indeed a wild and lonely scene, with the light of that elfish moon touching a bit of the belify and everything else looking shadowy and terrible, like things in troubled dreams. The wind was beginning to mountaining the tall pine. The wind was beginning to moun among the tall pine trees in the churchyard, and, while we stood shivering and hesitating, a scheech-owl in the belfry let out a frightful screech.

Of course we knew what it was; we had heard lots of screech-owls before. They love the trees along our river, and half a dozen of them live there. But we weren't expecting any noise then, so we all jumped and Kittie James screeched, too. The other girls were sorry for Kittie. I was not. Though I am only fifteen, I am a student of life, and this thought came to me: If that little owl was proud of his screeching, how perfectly dreadful he must have felt when Kittle James screeched so much better. For, of course, screeching was, in Kittle's life, "a thing apart," as Shakespeare says, but it was his "whole existence," I quote more from Shakespeare than I do from the Bible, because Shakespeare is so coldly intellectual.

While the thought about the screech was in my mind, and I was wishing I had a pencil and some paper to write it down so I wouldn't forget it, and almost forgetting entirely about the haunted ruin, Mabel Blossom spoke up, in distinct but trembling words.

"I will go first," she said. "I will ask the first question. The rest of you needn't come with me, if you are a fraid."

She started off toward the ruin with a rush, as if she had picked herself up and thrown herself at it. I knew why. It was because she was scared to death and didn't dare to go slowly. The other girls thought it was because she was so brave. Don't you see how much better I understand things than they do? Maudie and I went after her with learning than I went. and I went after her with languid steps; I wasn't a bit anxious to get nearer to the ruin. Of course the

a thousand nightmares. Maudie and I bent over Mabel, and each caught her by one foot. Then we ran, too, taking Mabel with us. It wasn't easy, for Mabel is plump and the fields were rough; but we were stronger than we knew. Even if she was dead, we couldn't leave Mabel to the lost souls in that ruin, so we ran and dragged, and dragged and ran. Once Mabel's hair caught on the stump of a tree, and we had to stop, and another time her blouse caught on something and tree straight down the front before we could get her tore straight down the front before we could get her away. All the time I thought of how the evil spirits might pursue us for robbing them of their prey, and of the shapes they might take. It is strange, indeed, and terrible, how many different thoughts the mind can think at such a time.

while we were pulling the blouse I heard panting breaths around us. At first I was afraid to look up. Who wouldn't be? I pause to inquire. But finally I did, and I saw that it was only the rest of the girls, running behind us and beside us. We were all together again. Everybody was running except the stark burden we dragged after us, but that was getting over the ground nice and fast, too. By and by it began to kick so we could hardly hold the feet. We stopped again, and dropped them, and saw what had happened. We had been dragging Mabel's face through the wet

sat up and wiped her face and asked what had hap-pened, and where she was. She wasn't very far from the ruin. We hadn't dragged her a long distance, after all, though it had seemed miles. The haunted church lay close behind us, spectral and terrible. We could see it by looking back.

After a few minutes Mabel got on her feet, but she couldn't walk, and she begged us not to leave her there to die alone. We had to wait till she was stronger. and while we were waiting I began to get calmer, and finally I had an idea. I hastened to share it with my

"I don't believe we heard any voice at all," I said. "I believe we imagined it, because we were frightened; or perhaps we hypnotized ourselves. I'm going back

It was not a noble courage that moved me, but that which is stronger than life-my art. All of a sudden t seemed impossible for me to go on without knowing what was down in the awful bowels of that ruin. Besides, how could I write a story about it if I didn't know? None of the girls offered to go back with me, but I didn't care. Almost before they could offer (not quite before, but almost) I was running back alone. In a very few minutes I reached the ruin, and without waiting a second, I called down into it over the old wall, the way Mabel had done. The wind was getting worse,

over. "I ain't gwine let any boy mah'y you if you all doan like him. Doan you cry. Doan you cry."

I knew she would save me, so I didn't cry any more. The other girls stood and looked on without sympathy, but with cold, blue noses and wet feet. Mabel Blossom told me later, with her own lips, that they all thought Maudie and I ought to have waited till we got indoors Maudie and I ought to have waited till we got indoors to talk about my marriage. But Maudie comforted me so much that pretty soon I felt better and got up. We all crept to the convent balcony, and climbed through what was left of the ivy, and got in the hall and reached our rooms—and not a soul heard us! It was too good to be true. I don't suppose the Sisters would ever have known anything about it if Kittie James hadn't had hystorica in her room just as soon as Maudie left. had hysterics in her room just as soon as Maudie left her there alone. Sister Edna heard the hysterics—every

her there alone. Sister Edna heard the hysterics—every one in that wing heard them, I guess—so the whole story came out. We were all visited in our rooms, and given baths and rubbings and hot drinks, and looked at with sad, reproachful eyes. But the Sisters didn't say much that night; it was too late.

If the reader will let me, I will draw a veil over the tragic happenings that followed the next day. I could describe them, but I don't like to write about sad things; my pen turns more to gaiety. Maudie and I had the worst time of all, I think, for Sister Irmingarde told us she had depended on us to use our influence for grass because we picked her up by the wrong end and were in such a hurry. But it had revived her, so you see it was really the best thing we could have done, though we hadn't thought of that at the time. We had just trusted to instinct, which it is truly said rarely fails the young. told us she had depended on us to use our influence for good at St. Catherine's, and that we had both failed her, and she feared she could never trust us again. You can imagine how we felt. We cried till we were sick. Maudie had to go to the infirmary, I didn't: I cried just as much, but I have a stronger constitution. Besides, I know that suffering is good for my art, and that always comforts me, right away. Pretty soon Mahel began to moan, and at last she Sometimes it comforts me so much that I can't keep on suffering; then my emotions are strange and puzzling. Even I can hardly describe them. Mabel Blossom was sent to Mother Ernesta, and we didn't see her for hours. When she finally came into the study hall, late in the afternoon, her eyes were red, too, and she buried her-

> But what worried us most of all was the memory of that dreadful voice. When a ghost has talked to you, and told you real things about your most intimate interests, you go around afterward with sinking feelings in your stomach, and you can't sleep nights. girls who went to the ruin got nervous, and went to the infirmary, like Maudie. Finally Mabel and I were the only girls not on the sick-list. Kittie James was so nervous she had to have one of the infirmarians sleep in the same room with her. Kittie said it was dreadful to wake at night and be thinking of beautiful, peaceful things, like a box from home, and then suddenly turn and look into the fleshless sockets of a ghost who was grinding the words "Frederick Manson" between his bony jaws. Of course that gave me hysterics, right off.

self in her books, as real authors say, and didn't speak

The Sisters forbade us to talk about the ruin or the ghost or to think about them, so we stopped talking; but our thoughts worked harder than ever, as they always do when you are not allowed to talk about things. At last the nuns put their heads to-gether, and sent for every girl, and talked to her alone. When that happens each girlish heart gives

up its maiden secrets.

Three days after Hallowe'en, the girls in the infirmary were told to get up and dress for supper. The nuns said something interesting was going to happen in the refectory, and no one should miss it. The girls rose, pale and wan, and when the supper bell rang we all went to the refectory together with a slow gait, like a band of minims stepping heavenward. It is not amusing in the refectory. We are not allowed to talk while we are eating. Usually Sister Italia reads an improving book, and of course that's enough to discourage any appetite, unless there's sardines. We were sure the interesting thing couldn't be food, because we know exactly what the food is going to be. Monday night, cold lamb and bread and butter and prunes and milk: Tuesday, cold beef and biscuits and canned peaches and milk; Wednesday—But I will spare the gentle reader. We have "simple, nourishing meals," as our prospectus says, and plenty of them; but I notice that whenever I talk about our food at the convent my father groans. He is a general in the army, too, and you know what privations they have. Of course we get lots of boxes from home, and they contain cakes and pickles and olives and jam that growing

We sat down without zest, and got ready to put food into ourselves absentmindedly, the way you put coals on the fire, and I was just wondering whether we were having little peaches or big apricots when I noticed that all the girls were staring toward the foot of the long room. I stared, too. Well indeed

A big canvas was stretched the whole width of the refectory, against the south wall. On that can-vas, in black crayon sketches, was the whole story of our Hallowe'en visit to the haunted church. We hadn't done a single thing that wasn't there. The first picture showed us climbing down the ivy. In second we were running across the fields. the second we were running across the fields. In the third we were at the ruins and Mabel was calling down to the ghost. The fourth showed Mabel fainting, and in the fifth we were dragging her across the fields on her face, and holding her feet, which looked dreadfully big. They are, too. Then a picture showed me calling to the ghost with Shakespeare under my arm. I don't think that was very good, for I didn't have Shakespeare under my arm. Another picture showed Maudie and me sitting on Another picture showed Maudie and me sitting on the ground, and Maudie comforting me, and there was a balloon thing coming out of Maudie's mouth, saying, "Doan you cry, honey, I ain't gwine let you mah'y him.

After that came our return up the ivy, with the ivy all hanging in shreds and patches, like shoestrings. In the corner of every picture was a per-fectly horrified little moon, looking down on us with eyes almost as big as his face, and his expression different every time. He was weeping over me and Maudie, in our picture. But the last two sketches were the ones that drew and held our unbelieving eyes. In the first Mabel Blossom was giving a dollar to Jonas, our old head gardener! In the other—the last one of all-Jonas was down in the church cellar, reading a list of names by the light of a tallow dsp, and shouting "Frederick Manson" up at me! The little moon had thrown his head back and was shouting, too, and the little stars were crowding around

to listen. Then, indeed, we knew all. The ghost was old Jonas, and Mabel Blossom had hired him to be a ghost. Was this perfidy? I do not pause for a reply. I know too well what it would be But we had our revenge; for after all, the ghost had fright-ened Mabel even more than he did us. Jonas changed his voice so dreadfully that Mabel thought the ghost had destroyed him and taken his place, as a punishment for her. She told us so afterward, as soon as we would let her tell us anything. At first

we wouldn't After we had looked at the pictures, and nobody had said anything because nobody was allowed to, Mabel got up from her place at the table and made a speech. She said she wanted to ask our pardon. She had played a very silly joke, and was sorry, She hoped we would forgive her. She would try to do better. Her face was very red. Then she sat down and Sister Italia said grace, and we all began eat, casting ever and anon disapproving looks at Mabel Blossom. But we felt ever so much more

It was a long, long time before we heard who made the drawings. That secret was kept locked in the nuns breasts. When we did hear, months afterthe nuns' breasts. When we did hear, months afterward, we could hardly believe it. I will let the gentle reader get the same shock.

It was Sister Irmingarde! Mabel had confessed to her, and Sister Irmingarde thought it would "remove the ghost impression most effectually" to do it

in a funny way. She had studied art out in the world before she became a nun. So she made the drawings. Wasn't she clever? When I write my drawings. Wasn't she clever? When I write my essay on Shakespeare I'm going to bring her in, too, Like Shakespeare, Sister Mary Irmingarde sees into the deepest recesses of the human heart.



other girls followed us. I guess they thought it was better to go with us into the jaws of death, and perhaps slide down, than to wait behind and die alone. The minute Mabel got to the wall she leaned across it and hung down over the awful blackness below. I was right behind her, and I distinctly saw her shut her eyes. The owl hadn't screeched again after Kittie had discouraged him, and now there wasn't a sound except Kittie's hard breaths. The moon had gone behind a cloud again. We heard wings flutter-the owl, perhaps, or bats in the ruin-and the scampering of little feet below us, like the feet of mice.

Suddenly Mabel spoke up, loud and clear, in the in-vocation Adeline Thurston had written for her:

"Oh, ruin, ruin, tell me true What I, Mabel Blossom, ask of you,— The name of my future husband."

We stood slose behind her and held our breaths, and waited for what would happen. The wings and feet stopped. I never listened to so much stillness, and then to so many echoes. It seemed as if the whole wide world must have heard Mabel's words going down into that abyss like thunder-claps, and coming up again in waves of sound that rolled around us. Kittie James says it was three hours before anything else happened, but really in about five minutes low, wailing voice came to us from below. This is what it said.

J-o-h-n G-o-r-d-o-n." The gentle reader won't believe this, but it hap-You have heard of heroines being frozen to the spot when something terrible occurred. That's the way I was-frozen. I could not stir an inch, and felt my knotted and combined locks parting, exactly

the way Shakespeare says they do.

I guess the other girls felt the way I did; there wasn't a sound among them. Even Kittle stopped breathing; not a leaf or a petticoat rustled. I tried to look around, but my eyes wouldn't move. My eyeballs felt like frozen gum-drops. Then we heard a queer, heavy sound, and there in front of us was Mabel Blossom, stretched out on the ground, flat on her face. She lay perfectly still; we knew she was dead.
That moved the girls! They started off in every direction, in leaping bounds, as if the ground was rising under them and they had to get up first; and as they ran they uttered choked, horrible noises. They

It sounded like a chorus of warning voices in the trees, but I didn't stop to listen. I said my verses in a loud determined voice.

"Ruin, ruin, tell me true, I, May Iverson, ask of you The name of my future husband."

At first there wasn't a sound in reply. But just as began to feel my spine getting a little warmer, that terrible voice rose from the abyss again, and this time it wailed like a banshee:

"F-r-e-d-e-r-i-c-k M-a-n-s-o-n."

Don't ask me what happened next. It would take a real writer like Edgar Allen Poe to tell you. Besides, I don't remember. I only know that I got back to the girls somehow, and that we stumbled across the cold, wet fields for centuries and centuries. At last I thought I had always been running away from a ghost, through a dark night, and that I must keep on doing it till the world came to an end.

I was going to shriek with the awfulness of it (yes, I really was) when I looked up and saw the blessed old convent buildings snuggled together in front of us, with our beautiful cross on the chapel spire pointing peacefully to the stars that were beginning to come out knew nothing could happen to us, then, so I stopped to breathe, and the others did. too, and pretty soon my mind got quieter. It went to work again right away, thinking about Frederick Manson. He is a boy I simply detest, and the girls know it. I see him when I am home on vacations, but I never answer the letters he writes me. He has no soul for art, and he is not intellectual. He makes me feel the way you do when you peel a peach or draw your finger nail across a crack in the window-pane. The thought of marrying him was so terribly bitter that I sat right down on the wet grass and began to cry. I never felt so nervous in

"I won't marry Frederick Manson!" I cried. "I on't! I won't! I'd rather die, right here, without

Maudie Joyce is a Southern girl, from Virginia, Once Maudie Joyce is a Southern girl, from Virginia. Once in a very, very long time, when she gets terribly excited, she talks with a kind of queer Southern drawl and accent, the way her old black mammy nurse used to talk to her when she was a tiny girl. She sat right down on the wet grass beside me, and put her arms tight around me, and rocked me back and forth.

"Doan you be frightened, honey," she said, over and